

LeClerc Creek Grazing Allotment EA
Transportation System

Framework

7703.24 – Maintaining and Reconstructing Roads

1. Emphasize maintenance and reconstruction of NFS roads to meet road management objectives (FSM 7714).
2. Give priority to maintaining and reconstructing the most heavily used roads to provide safe and efficient travel and to reduce adverse environmental impacts. Do not maintain unauthorized roads. After an administrative unit or ranger district has completed route and area designation, motor vehicle use is prohibited on unauthorized roads, and those roads may be decommissioned as funding permits. Temporary roads are maintained as provided in the contract, permit, lease, or other written authorization for those roads and must be decommissioned at the conclusion of the authorized activity.
3. Access needs for utilization and administration of NFS lands and resources may sometimes result in establishment of NFS roads that are part of the forest transportation system but are not designated for motor vehicle use by the general public, and therefore are not shown on an MVUM.
4. Intermittent-service roads may provide access for Forest Service administration of NFS lands or for motor vehicles authorized by contract, permit, or other written authorization issued under federal law or regulation (36 CFR 212.51(a)(8)). These roads should continue to be managed, maintained, and operated consistent with the applicable land management plan and applicable road management objectives.
5. Access needed to private property or developments on or near NFS lands also may result in establishment of public or private roads that cross NFS lands but are not necessary for the protection, administration, and utilization of the NFS and therefore are not forest roads or NFS roads. Like forest roads authorized by a legally documented right-of-way held by a state, county, or local public road authority, these roads should be maintained by the holder of the right-of-way.

7703.25 – Decommissioning Roads

1. Use travel analysis (FSM 7712; FSH 7709.55, ch. 20) to identify roads that may not be needed for the use and management of NFS lands; to identify roads that could be converted to trails; to identify restoration needs; and to establish decommissioning priorities. Unauthorized roads, temporary roads, and any NFS roads no longer needed for the use and management of NFS lands should be decommissioned. Do not designate temporary roads or unneeded roads for motor vehicle use, and do not show unneeded roads on an MVUM.

2. See FSM 7734 for further direction regarding decommissioning roads.

7709.57 – Road Construction Handbook

This handbook provides guidance on engineering for road construction.

Design Criteria: Critical Vehicle is Yarder/Lowboy standard vehicle from (FSH 7709.56). New alignment will match traffic service level G. The new alignment will be a single lane forest road with operational/objective maintenance level meeting a 2/2 standard. Travel way will remain native surface with out sloping to accommodate drainage.

Existing Condition

The Leclerc Creek Grazing Allotment lies approximately 13 miles northeast of Cusick, Washington situated largely in the Middle and West Fork of Leclerc Creek drainages. Leclerc Creek Road (Pend Oreille County 9345) provides the main access to the northern perimeter of the analysis area. Pend Oreille County roads 3503 and 3521 provide the main access to the southern portions while Forest Service collector roads 1932000, 1933000, 1935000 and 1936000 provide secondary access into the interior portions of this analysis area. Numerous Forest Service roads provide local access within the allotment.

Table 1 Roads by Jurisdiction in the Planning Area.

Jurisdiction	Length (miles)	Percent of total
State	0	0%
County	0	0%
Private	26	36%
USFS	45	64%

Based on a query of the corporate database INFRA-Travel Routes of the mapped transportation layer on 12/13/2012, there are approximately 71 miles of existing roads in the Leclerc Cr Range Allotment.

Unauthorized existing roads are not intended to be part of, and are not managed as part of the Forest transportation system and include unplanned roads, off-road vehicle tracks, and

abandoned travelways. There are likely more existing unauthorized roads in the analysis area that are not mapped.

An approximate breakdown of the 45 miles of roads under Forest Service jurisdiction in the planning area by operational/objective maintenance level yields the following estimates:

Table 2 Miles of System Road under Forest Service jurisdiction in the Planning Area by Maintenance Level.

Oper./Obj.	Length	Percent
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Maint. Level	(miles)	of total
Level 1/1	18.8	41.7%
Level 1/2	0	0%
Level 2/1	1.5	0.2%
Level 2/2	13.3	29.5%
Level 3/3	12.9	28.6%

Maintenance levels are used to describe the intensity of maintenance effort needed on a road to allow the road to function and be used as it is intended. There are five different levels used by the Forest Service (FSH 7709.58) to describe this intensity, with Level 1 being the lowest and Level 5 the highest. Following is a brief description of

the maintenance levels for FS roads in table 2 found in the planning area.

Maintenance Level 1: These roads are assigned to intermittent service roads during the time they are closed to vehicular traffic. The closure period is one year or longer. Basic custodial maintenance is performed to keep damage to adjacent resources to an acceptable level and to perpetuate the road to facilitate future management activities. Emphasis is normally given to maintaining drainage facilities and runoff patterns. Planned road deterioration may occur at this level. Appropriate traffic management strategies (See FSM 7731.11) are “prohibit” and “eliminate”. Roads placed in this category may be any type, class, or construction standard, and may be managed at any other maintenance level during the time they are open for traffic. However, while being maintained at Level 1, they are closed to vehicular traffic, but may be open and suitable for non-motorized uses. There are approximately 19 miles of Level 1 road in the Leclerc Creek Allotment Analysis Area under Forest Service jurisdiction. All Level 1 roads are closed physically (gate w/CFR, guardrail barricade, earthen berm, boulders etc.) or via roads that are closed physically.

There are seven roads, or segments of, totaling approximately 13.5 miles, identified as cost share roads with Stimson Lumber Company (SLC), Burlington Northern (BN), or the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR). A listing of the road, the estimated length of the cost share segment (rounded to nearest 0.1 mile), the beginning and ending mileposts (MP) of the shared segment, and the cooperator is as follows:

1933112 (1.0 miles) MP 0.0 to MP 1.0 w/SLC
1935011 (4.17 miles) MP 0.0 to MP 4.17 w/SLC
1935025 (4.2 miles) MP 0.0 to MP 4.207 w/SLC
1935107 (1.1 miles) MP 0.0 to MP 1.099 w/SLC
1935108 (0.3 miles) MP 0.0 to MP 0.3 w/SLC
1935110 (1.3 miles) MP 0.00 to MP 1.294 w/SLC
1935112 (1.1 miles) MP 0.00 to MP 1.09 w/SLC

Maintenance Level 2: Assigned to roads open for use by high clearance vehicles. Passenger car traffic is not a consideration. Traffic is normally minor, usually consisting of one or a combination of administrative, permitted, dispersed recreation, or other specialized uses. Log haul may occur at this level. Appropriate traffic management strategies are either (1) “discourage” or “prohibit” passenger cars or (2) “accept” or “discourage” high clearance vehicles.

There are approximately 14.8 miles of roads with an operational maintenance level of 2 in the LeClerc Creek Grazing Allotment Area under Forest Service jurisdiction. Of these, an estimated 0.00 miles have an objective maintenance level of 1. The strategy on these level 2/1 roads is to allow the roads to close naturally over time through reduced maintenance (brushing and blading) while assuming that vehicle use will decrease accordingly. It can be argued that due to the absence of a physical closure that vehicle use will continue keeping the road open and possibly lead to increased road maintenance and resource damage over time. There are no cost share segments for level 2/1 in the Leclerc Creek Grazing Allotment Area.

The remaining miles of Level 2 roads in the planning area have an objective maintenance level of 2, open roads for high clearance vehicles. Maintenance activities planned for accomplishment on roads in this category are intended to allow for the passage of high clearance vehicles and to prevent unacceptable resource damage. Segments of three different roads in this category, totaling approximately 7.06 miles, are currently cost shared with Stimson Lumber Company (SLC), Burlington Northern (BN), the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR), or Crown Pacific (CP). A listing of the road, the estimated length of the cost share segment (rounded to nearest 0.1 mile), the beginning and ending mileposts (MP) of the shared segment, and the cooperator is as follows:

1935011 (4.17 miles) MP 0.0 to MP 4.17 w/SLC
1935112 (1.09 miles) MP 0.0 to MP 1.09 w/SLC
1935115 (1.8 miles) MP 0.551 to MP 2.36 w/SLC

Maintenance Level 3: Assigned to roads open and maintained for travel by a prudent driver in a standard passenger car. User comfort and convenience are not considered priorities. Roads in this category are typically low speed, single lane with turnouts and spot surfacing. Some roads may be fully surfaced with either native or processed material. Appropriate traffic management strategies are either “encourage” or “accept”. Maintenance Level 3 roads are subject to the Highway Safety Act (P.L. 89-564), which requires appropriate signing in accordance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). There are only two roads (1935000) and (1936000), totaling approximately 12.9 miles, in this category in the planning area under USFS jurisdiction. The (1935000) road is currently cost shared with Stimson Lumber Company (MP 0.00 to MP 26.44).

Cattle Guards: There are eight cattle guards in the Leclerc Creek Grazing Allotment. These cattle guards are in various states of repair. Further analysis will be needed for each cattle guard location.

1933000 MP 0.00
1933000 MP 6.478
1934202 MP 0.03
1935000 MP 25.44
1935000 MP 21.06
1935105 MP 0.014
1935115 MP 0.535

Effects

Alternative A - No Change

System road use would remain unchanged. Cattle guard locations would remain unchanged. No new construction or decommissioning would take place. No changes in maintenance intervals or locations if this alternative was selected.

Alternative B - No Action

System road use would see a minor decrease from permittee and Forest Service administration use. Road maintenance would decrease after the removal of cattle guards and signage that is associated with the cattle guards. This would be a minor saving to the Forest Service maintenance budget.

Alternative C – Proposed Action with Adaptive Management

There are eight existing cattle guards on National Forest System roads within the LeClerc Creek Grazing Allotment analysis area. All but one of these would remain in their current locations. Under the Proposed Action the cattle guard at mile post (MP) 25.44 on NFSR 1935000 would be relocated north to new allotment boundary in T. 36 N., R. 44 E., Section 20, SE ¼.

In this proposal one new cattle guard would be installed on NFSR 1935011 near the eastern edge of section 10, T. 36 N., R. 44 E. (Stimson boundary). Install two new cattle guards on NFSR 1935000 where it crosses private in T. 36 N., R. 44 E., section 21, NW ¼ (Stimson boundary). Install one new cattle guard on NFSR 1936000 at location to be determined to keep cattle from drifting off pasture. Finally assess the need for one new cattle guard on NFSR 1935000 southwest of Bunchgrass meadows to keep cattle from drifting off pasture in that location.

In this proposal there would be a change to the system road location accessing the Lower Bunchgrass Pasture in T. 36 N., R. 44 E., sections 20 and 29. This would require new construction of approximately 600 feet of new alignment off the existing NFSR 1935116. Currently the NFSR 1935116 is a gated closed road so the gate would need moved approximately 200 feet north. In this proposal 800 feet of existing NFSR 1935117 would be decommissioned and closed. New construction would allow access to meadow and allow permittee to release and gather cows. With the road decommissioning it would restore the hydrologic integrity of the wetland area.

With this decision all maintenance, new construction/installations of cattle guards and roads would be completed as time and funding allows. Locations of cattle guards and roads would need to be in agreement with all parties involved. The proposed action and its specific activities meet Forest Plan direction and do not negatively affect the transportation system.

The aggregate for placing on the roads along or near streams would most likely come from a West Branch Pit (Scotchman Pit) on NFSR 1933110.

Cumulative Effects

Existing Forest Service Stewardships Hanlon and Scotchman could be a concern for timing of maintenance and new installation of cattle guards. Check with district Sale Administration for timing of any Stewardship activities.

Stimson Lumber Companies could be hauling timber on these routes also. Any maintenance or construction activities could interfere with their haul. Check with Stimson Lumber Company for timing of logging activities before any maintenance or construction take place.

Alternative D – Modification of Alternative C

This alternative incorporates all the elements of Alternative C, but with modifications. Current management of the allotment would change as described in the discussion of Alternative C. Direct, indirect, and cumulative effects would be similar to those described for Alternative C.

There are eight existing cattle guards on National Forest System roads within the LeClerc Creek Grazing Allotment analysis area and all would remain in their current locations. Under Alternative D, one new cattle guard would be installed on NFSR 1935011 near the eastern edge of section 10, T. 36 N., R. 44 E, and two new cattle guards would be installed on the Paupac Road (FR 1936). One in T. 37 N., R. 43 E., section 23, and one on FR 1936010 in T. 37 N., R. 43 E., section 25.

All maintenance, new construction/installations of cattle guards and roads would be completed as time and funding allows. Locations of cattle guards and roads would need to be in agreement with all parties involved. Alternative D and its specific activities meet Forest Plan direction and do not negatively affect the transportation system.

Monte Zema Jr.
Civil Engineering Tech
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